(b) whether the Home Minister has called for the removal of all bottlenecks in the way of travel and tourism so as to boost the tourism industry; and

(c) if so, the details thereof ?

THE MINISTER OF TOURISM AND CULTURE (SHRI ANANTH KUMAR) : (a) Yes, Sir. There is a perception that India is a comparatively costly destination.

(b) Yes, Sir.

(c) As a part of its on-going activities of promoting tourism to the country, and removing the bottlenecks, Ministry of Tourism is coordinating with other Departments who provide tourism services. In this context, Minister of Tourism and Culture has held many meetings with other Ministers, including Minister of Home Affairs, to discuss ways and means for removal of bottlenecks and tourism development and growth. New initiatives on facilitation, like visa on arrival, on information dissemination and interministerial coordinated have been mooted.

Medieval period temples in Gujarat

*529. DR. C. NARAYANA REDDY : Will the Minister of TOURISM AND CULTURE be pleased to state :

(a) whether it is a fact that in the recent excavations in Umta Village near Vadnagar in North Gujarat a medieval (11th to 13th centuries) Hindu Jain Temple with its broad features intact, has been unearthed;

(b) whether the Archaeological Survey of India has been associated with this important operation; and

(c) if not, whether Government would ensure that A.S.I. takes charge of further excavations and also of the unearthed items reportedly kept in local panchayat building ?

THE MINISTER OF TOURISM AND CULTURE (SHRI ANANTH KUMAR) : (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) No, Sir.

(c) Since the Gujarat State Department of Archaeology has excavated the site and the unearthed items are already in the custody of the State Government. The department have no proposal appropriate to intervene in the matter at this stage.